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SUBJECT: UN SECURITY COUNCIL HOLDS SPECIAL SESSION ON
UNOMIG REPORT ON UAV SHOOTDOWN

¶1. (SBU) Summary: On May 30 the UN Security Council held a special session on the UN Observer Mission in Georgia's (UNOMIG) report on the shootdown of a Georgian UAV on April 20. Georgian Permrep Alasania stated that he had come to discuss a direct threat to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia, underscoring that the report of UNOMIG's independent investigation had held Russia responsible. Alasania charged that Russia had revealed a biased approach and was undermining its role as a facilitator of the peace process and pointed to the UNOMIG reports' observation that third party action was inconsistent with the Moscow Agreement and may raise concerns under international law. Alasania encouraged the Security Council to consider "a truly international law enforcement and security component" through adjustment of the peacekeeping mechanisms. He stated the Georgia seeks to work with Russia, but stressed that "the ball is in Russia's court." Alasania called for: a withdrawal of the additional military complement deployed in Abkhazia on April 30, reversal of the March 6 withdrawal from CIS sanctions, reversal of the April 16 Russian Presidential Instructions and international inspection of the Gadauta military base.

¶2. (SBU) Russian Permrep Churkin insisted the UAV incident covered in UNOMIG's report was solely a bilateral issue between Georgians and Abkhaz and could not be usefully discussed without the presence of an Abkhaz representative. Without directly denying Russian responsibility, he stated that Georgian UAV flights constitute "a military action" and said such flights have been systemic. He claimed that the violation of Georgia's air borders had not been confirmed therefore the jet could have come from anywhere and could even have been Georgian. Ambassador Wolff stated that UNOMIG's report on the downing of a UAV over Georgian territory offers evidence of Russia's unwillingness to respect Georgia's territorial integrity and sovereignty. He noted that Churkin had not directly denied the conclusions of the report regarding possible Russian culpability. Wolff called on Russia to reverse its recent provocative actions on Abkhazia that undermine the Friends' process and to reduce its heightened military posture in Abkhazia. France, Belgium, China and the UK also made statements. Eight members of the Security Council made no statements. End Summary.

Georgia: Russia Responsible, Ball Now In Russia's Court

¶3. (SBU) On May 30 the UN Security Council held a special session at the request of Georgia on UNOMIG's report on the shootdown of a Georgian UAV on April 20. Georgian Permrep Alasania stated that he had come to the Security Council to discuss a direct threat to the sovereignty and territorial

integrity of Georgia, underscoring that the report of UNOMIG's independent investigation into the shooting down of a Georgian UAV on April 20 held Russia responsible. He said that Georgia had exercised its sovereign right of monitoring the situation on its own territory and UNOMIG's fact finding team had concluded that Georgia's video was authentic.

Alasania noted that UNOMIG had concluded that either a MIG-29 or SU-27 intercepted the UAV and had flown away into Russian airspace after the attack. Alasania charged that Russia had revealed its biased approach and was undermining its role as a facilitator of the peace process and pointed to the reports' observation that third party action is inconsistent with the Moscow Agreement and may raise concerns under international law. Alasania stated that the shootdown of the UAV and recent Russian Presidential Order to establish legal ties with Abkhazia and South Ossetia "constitute a profound disregard for the sovereignty of Georgia." He said that the CIS Peacekeeping Force had failed to maintain a secure and stable environment in the zone of hostility and the Georgian population there is subject "to constant terror with their human rights violated with the tacit consent or direct involvement of the Russian peacekeepers." He also criticized the recent Russian transfer into Abkhazia of an airborne brigade, armed with heavy weaponry, including artillery and air defense systems.

¶4. (SBU) Alasania called for a recognition of the dichotomy between the existing peacekeeping operation in Abkhazia and impartial peacekeeping operations as envisaged by the founders of the UN. Alasania encouraged the Security Council to consider "a truly international law enforcement and

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security component" through adjustment of the peacekeeping mechanisms. Alasania also demanded from Russia an official explanation of the act of aggression, compensation for the Ministry of Internal Affairs' material loss and a commitment to refrain from provocative acts in Georgia's conflict regions. He stated the Georgia seeks to work with Russia, but stressed that "the ball is in Russia's court." Alasania called for: a withdrawal of the additional military complement deployed in Abkhazia on April 30, reversal of the March 6 withdrawal from CIS sanctions, reversal of the April 16 Russian Presidential Instructions and international inspection of the Gadauta military base. Alasania concluded that Georgia had recently re-engaged the Abkhaz side, but for this to succeed Georgians and Abkhaz needed to avoid being pulled into an externally generated military provocations. Speaking again at the end of the session Alasania announced that to honor the UNOMIG report, Georgia had halted all UAV flights for now and asked the Security Council to consider a trip to Georgia in the near future.

Russia: UNSC Discussion Not Objective Without Abkhaz Presence

¶5. (SBU) Russian Permrep Churkin began his intervention by insisting the incident covered in UNOMIG's report was solely a bilateral issue between Georgians and Abkhaz and could not be objectively discussed without the presence of an Abkhaz representative. Without directly denying Russia responsibility, he stated that Georgian UAV flights constitute "a military action" and said these flights have been systemic and that the Abkhaz had shot down seven Georgian UAVs recently, three of which were mentioned in UNOMIG's report. Churkin alleged that Georgia's denial of the loss of these other UAVs calls into question its control of its own airspace system and alleged that the validity of Georgia's evidence should therefore be questioned. Churkin said the violation of Georgia's air borders had not been confirmed therefore the jet could have come from anywhere and could even have been Georgian and that it also had not even been concluded what kind of plane was involved. Churkin said that the Georgian government and UNOMIG should submit to Russia all materials used in the investigation, including those that were not used in UNOMIG's final report.

US: Russia Should Reverse Recent Provocative Actions

¶6. (SBU) Ambassador Wolff stated that UNOMIG's report on the downing of a UAV over Georgian territory offered evidence of Russia's unwillingness to respect Georgia's territorial integrity and sovereignty. He noted that he had not heard Churkin deny the conclusions of the report regarding possible Russian culpability. Wolff stressed the report dealt with two issues that were of an entirely different magnitude. One issue was Georgia's use of UAVs that UNOMIG had determined to be a violation of the Moscow Agreement, but regarding which the Moscow Agreement is in fact unclear at best as it makes no mention of UAVs. The second much more serious issue was Russia's action in shooting down the UAV that had violated Georgia's territorial integrity and was not consistent with the Moscow Agreement, international law or the UN Charter. Wolff rejected Churkin's attempts to attack the UNOMIG report as invalid. He called on Russia to reverse its recent provocative actions on Abkhazia that undermine the Friends' process and to reduce its heightened military posture in Abkhazia. Wolff also called on both sides to reduce tensions. In addition, Wolff recognized Georgia's restraint and goal of developing a peace plan in collaboration with Abkhaz authorities that will de-escalate military tension on both sides and pave the way for a political settlement.

Statements By France, Belgium, China and UK

¶7. (SBU) French Permrep Ripert said that the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia must be protected, which all Security Council members had committed themselves to in UNSCR ¶1808. Ripert said that France opposes any use of force in the region. He also noted that the EU is ready to actively cooperate in any investigation. Belgian Deputy Permrep Belle expressed gratitude to UNOMIG for an impartial investigation that had produced a detailed report. He said dialogue should be re-launched among the parties. Chinese Deputy Permrep Liu expressed support for Georgia's sovereignty and territorial

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integrity. He said that China supports dialogue between the parties and hopes Georgia and Russia can improve their relationship.

¶8. (SBU) UK Permrep Sawers called the conclusions of UNOMIG's report "deeply troubling" and pointed out that Russia had raised questions but not directly denied involvement in the incident. Sawers said the UK condemns any action that harms resolution of the conflict and particularly the use of force. He said that the fact that UAV had been shot down near or inside of civilian airspace is particularly alarming.

Comment

¶9. (SBU) The fact that a majority a Security Council members chose not to speak at all, following the same pattern as the April 23 session, is striking. This many Security Council members rarely forgo their right to speak so this clearly reflects the hesitations of many to get between the U.S. and Russia.

Wolff